

To School Administrators and Community Medical Professionals:

The purpose of this communication is to clarify information related to the sharing of medical information between medical providers and schools.

In the Spring of 2007, the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) revised their policies regarding physical examinations for secondary-level students desiring to participate in sports. As a result, various parties *erroneously* concluded that schools should not receive or possess private medical information on students.

The facts:

- NSAA policy changes do not affect statutory requirements for physical examination, visual evaluation, or immunization records for schools.
- A clearance statement, signed by a physician, PA, or advance practice registered nurse, which provides the date of examination of a specifically named individual is sufficient. *However, when a child has significant medical findings, a complete physical examination report with a description of findings is recommended.*
- HIPAA permits the disclosure of the physical examination report by the medical provider to the school with prior written parent/guardian authorization. The medical provider may also provide the completed physical examination report directly to the parent/guardian of the minor child, who in turn may provide the information to the school. Further information about HIPAA can be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>.
- Immunization records and visual evaluation reports are required in full detail by law in order for the school to determine compliance. These may be provided to the school by a parent/guardian or by the immunization provider/examiner upon written parent/guardian consent to release the report to the school.

While no specific form is required for compliance with school health requirements, a physical examination form, a physical examination "short form" for the child with normal findings, age-appropriate health history forms, a visual evaluation form, and waiver forms are available on the DHHS website, www.dhhs.ne.gov.

Our schools and school health professionals play an important role in assuring the health and safety of Nebraska students. Parents should feel confident that they can provide important medical information to schools that, while private and protected, is integral to the school's ability to ensure every child is safe and given a chance to do their best.

If you have questions or would like more information about school health in Nebraska, we urge you to contact the DHHS School and Child Health Program at 402-471-0160.

Sincerely,



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